

## Psalm 97

Transfiguration; Christmas Dawn

7th Sunday of Easter Year C

Morning Prayer Wednesday Week 2

Office of Readings Transfiguration, Saint Michael and the Apostles

This is the fifth of a series of psalms celebrating God's kingship (93-99). It celebrates God's justice which vindicates those who are loyal to the covenant. All other gods and all those who do evil cower before the manifestation of God the judge.

**<sup>1</sup>YHWH\* is king! Let the earth rejoice; let the many coast lands be glad!**

Sing to YHWH a new song, his praise from the end of the earth! Let the sea roar and all that fills it, the coast lands and their inhabitants ... Let them glory to YHWH, and declare his praise in the coast lands.

– Isaiah 42:10,12

I will bring near my deliverance swiftly, my salvation has gone out and my arms will rule the peoples; the coast lands wait for me, and for my arm they hope.

– Isaiah 51:5

As Christians we think of Jesus:

a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.

– Luke 2:32

**<sup>2</sup>Clouds and thick darkness are all around him; justice\* and right judgment\* are the foundation of his throne.**

On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud on the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled.

– Exodus 19:16

You approached and stood at the foot of the mountain while the mountain was blazing up to the very heavens, shrouded in dark clouds.

– Deuteronomy 4:11

He tore open the heavens, and came down, a black cloud under his feet. He rode on the back of a cherub; he came swiftly on the wings of the wind. He made darkness his covering, wrapped in a canopy of thick, black storm-clouds.

Lightning announced his presence, with hailstones and flashes of fire.

– Psalm 18:9-12

John of the Cross writes:

When God sends the illuminating ray of his secret wisdom out from himself to a soul that is not yet transformed, it causes thick darkness in the understanding.

– Dark Night II, 5

Justice and right judgment are the foundation of your throne; kindness and faithfulness go before you. Happy are the people who acclaim you.

YHWH, they will walk in the light of your countenance.

– Psalm 89:14-15

You will be visited by YHWH of hosts with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire.

– Isaiah 29:6

The tongue of YHWH is like a devouring fire.

– Isaiah 30:27

A stream of fire issued and flowed out from his presence.

– Daniel 7:10

Your lightning lit up the world;  
the earth trembled and shook.

– Psalm 77:18 (see Psalm 18)

In the middle of the living creatures there was something that looked like burning coals of fire, like torches moving to and fro among the living creatures; the fire was bright, and lightning issued from the fire.

– Ezekiel 1:13

Then the mountains will melt under him  
and the valleys will burst open, like wax near the fire,  
like waters poured down a steep place.

– Micah 1:4

Our God is a consuming fire.

– Hebrews 12:29

The mighty God. God YHWH, speaks, summoning the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth. Our God is coming and does not keep silence. Before him is a devouring fire, and a mighty tempest surrounds him.

– Psalm 50:1-3

For the expression ‘Lord of all the earth’ see Micah 4:13; Zechariah 4:14 [= Revelation 11:4], Zechariah 6:5.

They shall see the glory of YHWH,  
the majesty of our God.

– Isaiah 35:6

Then the glory of YHWH shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together.

– Isaiah 40:5

**<sup>3</sup>Fire goes before him,  
and consumes his adversaries on every side.**

**<sup>4</sup>His lightning lights up  
the world; the earth sees  
and trembles.**

**<sup>5</sup>The mountains melt like  
wax before YHWH, the  
Lord of all the earth.**

**<sup>6</sup>The heavens proclaim  
his righteousness\*; and  
all the peoples behold  
his glory\*.**

## The power of YHWH

**<sup>7</sup>All worshippers of images are put to shame, those who make their boast in worthless idols; all gods bow down before him.**

They shall be turned back and utterly put to shame  
– those who trust in carved images, who say to cast images, ‘You are our gods.’

– Isaiah 42:17

Acclaim YHWH, O heavenly beings.  
Acclaim the glory and might of YHWH.

– Psalm 29:1

Hebrews 1:6 quotes the last part of verse 7, following the Septuagint Greek version: ‘Let all God’s *angels* bow down before him.’

YHWH is coming out of his place, and will come down  
and tread upon the high places of the earth.  
Then the mountains will melt under him and the valleys will burst open,  
like wax near the fire, like waters poured down a steep place ...  
I will pour down her [Samaria’s] stones into the valley, and uncover her foundations.  
All her images shall be beaten to pieces.

– Micah 1:3-4, 6-7

The iron smith fashions it and works it over the coals, shaping it with hammers, and forging it ... He makes it in human form, with human beauty, to be set up in a shrine ... The carpenter makes a god and worships it, makes it a carved image and bows down before it. Half of it he burns in the fire; over this half he roasts meat, eats it and is satisfied. He also warms himself and says, ‘Ah, I am warm, I can feel the fire!’ The rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, bows down to it and worships it; he prays to it and says, ‘Save me, for you are my god!’ They do not know, nor do they comprehend; for their eyes are shut, so that they cannot see, and their minds as well, so that they cannot understand. No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, ‘Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals, I roasted meat and have eaten. Now shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?’ He feeds on ashes; a deluded mind has led him astray, and he cannot save himself or say, ‘Is not this thing in my right hand a fraud?’

– Isaiah 44:12-20

**<sup>8</sup>Zion hears and is glad, and the towns of Judah rejoice because of your judgments\*, O God.  
<sup>9</sup>For you, YHWH, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods.**

Let Mount Zion be glad, let the towns of Judah rejoice because of your judgments.

– Psalm 48:11

For YHWH, the Most High, is to be feared,  
great king over all the earth.

– Psalm 47:2

Let them know that you alone, whose name is YHWH, are the Most High over all the earth.

– Psalm 83:18

When these things begin to take place, stand up  
and raise your heads, because your redemption is  
drawing near.

– Luke 21:28

The Hebrew reads: ‘Light is sown’ (Hebrew *zārā‘*,  
זָרַע). This seems to be an error, the correct read-  
ing being ‘dawns’ (Hebrew *zārāḥ*, זָרַח).

Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in  
the gate.

– Amos 5:15

Should you not know justice? – you who hate the  
good and love the evil.

– Micah 3:1-2

The people who walked in darkness have seen  
a great light; those who lived in a land of deep  
darkness— on them light has shone.

– Isaiah 9:2 (quoted in Matthew 4:16)

<sup>10</sup>**YHWH loves those who hate  
evil; he guards the lives of his  
faithful; he rescues them from  
the hand of the wicked.**

<sup>11</sup>**Light dawns for the right-  
eous\*, and joy for the upright\*  
in heart\*.**

<sup>12</sup>**Rejoice in YHWH, O you  
righteous\*, and give thanks to  
his holy name.**